

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-12 EB-08 AID-05

HA-05 /122 W

-----083381 061104Z /17

R 060948Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6228

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0038

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PBOR, ET, SO, SU

SUBJECT: HORN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 0001, B. KHARTOUM 0021, C. 77 KHARTOUM 4482

1. DURING FIRST WEEK OF NEW YEAR SEVERAL SEPARATE HORN-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN PROMINENT COVERAGE IN LOCAL PRESS. AS NOTED REF A, PRESS HAS GIVEN SOMEWHAT UPBEAT COVERAGE TO IMPROVEMENT ETHIOPIA-SUDAN RELATIONS. FOLLOWING HIS JANUARY 1 THREE AND ONE-HALF HOUR MEETING WITH NIMEIRI, ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR RESUMED NORMAL ACTIVITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, HE ATTENDED NATIONAL DAY FESTIVITIES IN DONGOLA, ALTHOUGH HE MANAGED AVOID GREETING SIAD BARRE.

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2. SIAD BARRE'S VISIT (REFS A AND B) HAS NOW CONCLUDED WITH SOMALI PRESIDENT MOVING ON TO OMAN. WE DO NOT RPT NOT HAVE ANY INFO RE SUBSTANCE OF HIS MEETINGS WITH NIMEIRI, ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR DID HAVE OPPORTUNITY SHAKE HIS HAND (TWICE) IN DONGOLA.

3. WITH RESPECT TO ERITREA, THERE HAS BEEN STRAIGHT COVERAGE OF ETHIOPIAN AIR ATTACKS AGAINST TESSENNEY AND KEREN. REPORTS INDICATE ETHIOPIAN USE OF NAPALM AND RESULTING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. SUNA REPORTS JAN 4 REUTER DISPATCH FROM ROME THAT ELF FORCES HAVE CAPTURED ASMARA AIRPORT.

4. IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGREEMENT BETWEEN NIMEIRI AND ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR (REF A), SEVEN ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS, 269 SOLDIERS AND FOUR CHILDREN HAVE ARRIVED IN KHARTOUM TO BE REPATRIATED TO ETHIOPIA. SUNA ANNOUNCEMENT SAID REFUGEE-SOLDIERS WOULD LEAVE NEXT SATURDAY, JANUARY 7. ETHIOPIAN MILITARY WHO DO NOT WISH TO RETURN MAY STAY IN SUDAN.

5. COMMENT: WE CANNOT YET SAY WHETHER SIAD BARRE'S LATEST SWING THROUGH SUDAN WAS OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE. IT DOES SEEM CLEAR SUDANGOV TRYING TO KEEP RECENTLY IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA ON RELATIVELY EVEN KEEL DESPITE ETHIOPIAN AIR ATTACKS IN ERITREA. RETURN OF ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES/SOLDIERS MAY BE MOST SIGNIFICANT ITEM NOTED ABOVE BECAUSE IT PROBABLY DIRECTLY RELATED TO NIMEIRI'S EFFORTS OBTAIN RETURN OF ANSAR DISSIDENTS PRESENTLY IN ETHIOPIA. WE ESTIMATE THERE SOME FOUR THOUSAND ARMED ANSAR IN ETHIOPIA WHO, TOGETHER WITH ANOTHER ONE THOUSAND OR SO IN LIBYA, COMPRISE WHAT SUDANESE CONSIDER TO BE SERIOUS POTENTIAL THREAT AGAINST REGIME. ARMED ANSAR FROM ETHIOPIA AND LIBYA WERE KEY ELEMENT IN NEARLY SUCCESSFUL JULY 1976 COUP ATTEMPT AGAINST NIMEIRI. THUS, NIMEIRI'S EFFORTS
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NEUTRALIZE WHAT HE CONSIDERS BE SERIOUS THREAT AGAINST DOMESTIC STABILITY APPEARS TO BE IMPORTANT ELEMENT NOW OF HIS POLICY TOWARD ETHIOPIA. RETURN OF ANSAR TO SUDAN IS ALSO IMPORTANT ASPECT OF NIMEIRI'S RECONCILIATION WITH OPPOSITION. APPARENTLY HE HAS DETERMINED THAT HE WILL BE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN NEUTRALIZING ANSAR THREAT BY BEING ON RELATIVELY FRIENDLY TERMS WITH ETHIOPIA THAN BY ANTAGONIZING HIS EASTERN NEIGHBOR. NEVERTHELESS, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM PURSUE THIS APPROACH AS LONG AS FIGHTING CONTINUES IN ERITREA AND SIGNIFICANT SOVIET PRESENCE REMAINS IN ETHIOPIA. WE THINK THESE MATTERS ARE OF MORE IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO NIMEIRI THAN OGADEN WAR AND PROBLEMS SIAD BARRE MAY HAVE, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY ALL ARE INTERRELATED.
BERGUS

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